

A year ago, the **Lexington wrestling** team did not respond well to a loss to **Hillcrest** in the Class 4A state championship match. The Wildcats were an uninspired bunch during the individual phase of the postseason in the final two weeks of the season.

Lexington produced no state champions at the traditional state tournament and only three place winners and finished 11th in the team standings.

Two weeks ago, the Wildcats were dealt an ever more bitter setback by **Hillcrest** in the big-school title bout. But instead of going through the motions in individual matters, **Lexington** took it seriously and dominated the state tournament in Anderson.

Sophomore Jackson Myers and junior Nate Meagher won individual titles, six of the seven qualifiers placed and the Wildcats ran away for team honors – ringing up 85 team points to 66 for second-place Rock Hill.

Myers, a fourth-place finished at 103 a year ago, went 3-0 on the way to a triumph at 106 pounds and a 48-1 season record. He pinned his way to the finals and beat Alex Roberts of **Hillcrest** 6-0 for the gold medal. Meagher, who was the No. 4 seed out of the Lower State at 220 pounds, put it all together at state for the first time – pinning Justin Boozer of **Hillcrest** in the opener, edging Lugoff-Elgin's Allen Jenerette 3-1 in the semifinals and beating defending state champion Maliek Maldonado 4-2 in the championship match. Meagher closed with a 48-2 record.

Those were the obvious highlights, but the Wildcats solid team performance also featured a runner-up effort by Andy Szalwinski, and consolation titles by Walker Barfield (138) and Caleb Brack (152) and a fourth-place effort by Blake Risinger (120). Cody Bonham did not place, but at least contributed one win to the cause.

Szalwinski (41-5) dropped a tough 3-1 decision in the 113-pound final to Dorman's Hector Contreras, who was a silver medallist at 103 a year ago after knocking off Irmo senior Louis Biles in the semifinals.

Barfield and Brack took different paths to third place. Barfield bounced back from a semifinal loss to eventual champion Versean Ponds of Dorman to scored two tight consolation bracket wins, including a 1-0 success Chad Wood of Summerville in the consolation final. Brack, on the other hand, rebounded from a first-round loss to go 3-0 in the consolation bracket to bag a bronze medal. Brack's 9-6 win over Gaffney's Thomas Mabry made it official. Barfield finished with a 42-9 record and Brack closed his career with a 44-11 senior grade.

Risinger went 2-2 to finish 32-14 for the season. He was pinned in the semifinals by Summerville's Jordan Wigger, who went on to become the 14th wrestler to retire as a four-time state champion in SC history.